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Action Contemplated

THE intention of the federal government to appoint a royal commission to make a thorough study of railway problems in Canada appeared yesterday as a decisive step on the part of the administration to come to grips with this issue. Prime Minister Diefenbaker stated that he expects the inquiry to be completed within a year, at which time the cabinet should have an authoritative report presenting the facts in a many-sided problem and no doubt appending the commission's recommendations. The eight Provinces in Canada which have objected to subsisting arrangements in connection with rail tariffs and other facets of the issue now, have the prospect of a grass roots inquiry into the whole matter.

They should welcome that. Mr. Diefenbaker would hardly have committed the federal government to this action unless the cabinet intended to go into the whole question from the ground up. While the terms of the commission's reference have yet to be announced, it is clear that the administration is seeking a new assessment of the complex railway problem in all of its ramifications before setting about the task of reshaping Dominion policy in transportation matters. Beside the long-continued contention over freight rates from the past there are today many current and newer problems arising from vast changes in the conditions of rail transportation itself, in competition with all other forms of traffic.

A fresh inquiry, along the lines of the Gordon commission and some other federal investigations, should prove a good deal more helpful than would any attempt to patch up the present regulations as they stand. A commission with general powers of inquiry would be in a position to make a thorough-going and effective study of the whole problem. Such a review should be of much value in the determination of eventual solutions. Primarily, no doubt, it will be a fact-finding body.

While the Provinces do not need to be consulted on the choice of the federal rail commission, there is little doubt that the government will itself bear in mind the regional nature of many of the issues in contention. The Maritimes, the settled East, the Prairies and the Pacific seaboard must all be affected by whatever is decided finally at the federal policy level. It is realistic, therefore, to start at the fact-finding end of the matter, and this the railway commission unquestionably will do.

Public Good Will

IT will be with considerable regret that the Junior Chamber of Commerce has dropped its ice arena plan for lack of public support. The project was commendable. An auxiliary to the Memorial Arena is desirable if youngsters are to be allowed more skating time than is presently possible. It seems apparent however that amenities of this kind do not appeal strongly to citizens continually being asked for financial help.

In a growing community the saturation point may never actually be reached but a tightening of private purse strings is noticeable. Either people are forced by economic conditions to draw in their horns or they feel surfeited by too many separate demands on their good will. This is what makes difficult the campaigns even of major charity and welfare undertakings which enjoy much public sympathy and interest. Happily these invariably do reach their goals, or very close to them, but they have to struggle hard to attain the objectives.

The response to charity and that to provision of a public amenity are different, however. The emotion and kindliness associated with the former is lacking in the latter, which savors more of a business proposition. Perhaps the direct approach of business investment will have to be applied if such ventures are to reach fruition.

It is most unlikely for instance that a civic auditorium can be built if it depends on public subscription; the result would probably be similar to that of the Jaycees ice surface plan. Some quid pro quo, in the form of baby bonds or other return, would seem to be needful if personal pockets are to be persuaded to underwrite such a structure. In the case of an auditorium, of course, there is the implied promise of government aid.

Perhaps when in a few months time the province becomes direct-debt free something tangible may materialize; out of the millions to be saved in interest payments there could be spared enough to provide the capital city with this appropriate adornment to its worthwhile assets. If an auditorium must come from a public apt to feel itself already over-solicited the prospects are none too good.

Ambiguous Instruction

BY way of signs, lane markings and various other devices the Victoria traffic authorities latterly have been doing a good job of organizing downtown traffic into some semblance of order. The various aids to safe and sane driving are so simple and obvious that one would have to be half-blind or half-witted to misunderstand them.

But in the latest addition to the system of directions someone appears to have made a little blunder, thereby introducing an element of ambiguity. We refer to the newly painted road-surface direction at the Fountain which is intended to read thus: "Yield to Circle Traffic." However, following the practice adopted for forest conservation purposes on provincial main highways, the wording has been reversed, so that from top to bottom it reads: "Traffic Circle to Yield." That message could be interpreted as the direct opposite of the traffic department's intention.

On the arterial highways the lettering of the "Keep B.C. Green" slogan is so big and the words are spaced so far apart that a driver proceeding at normal highway speed reads it as he is supposed to read it. But at the Fountain everything is on a smaller scale and a driver can see the whole direction at a single glance.

If he takes it to mean that traffic in the circle will yield to him, there are the makings of a collision.

Elsewhere there are the same type of reverse direction signs on street surfaces saying "Left Turn Only," but with them the meaning is the same whichever way the words are read. At the Fountain most drivers will interpret the new sign correctly, but there is danger if only a few take it the wrong way. Perhaps an overhead sign would serve the purpose better.

Interpreting the News

NATO Is Widely Based

By GEORGE KITCHEN
Canadian Press Staff Writer

STATESMEN from 15 nations gather in Washington this week to celebrate the 10th anniversary of an organization that ranks as one of the most unique in the history of collective self-defence.

The birthday they mark is that of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the defence alliance formed in 1949 to defend the Atlantic community against the increasing threat of Soviet expansion and aggression.

Never in history has a security pact brought together so many and such diverse peoples as this Atlantic alliance. Never has a treaty covered such widely differing areas.

With Canada and Greenland, the alliance comes within reach of the North Pole. To the south, through French colonial possessions, it touches the great Sahara Desert. It reaches the Pacific Ocean through the western coasts of Canada and the United States and verges on the strategic Caucasus Mountains through Turkey.

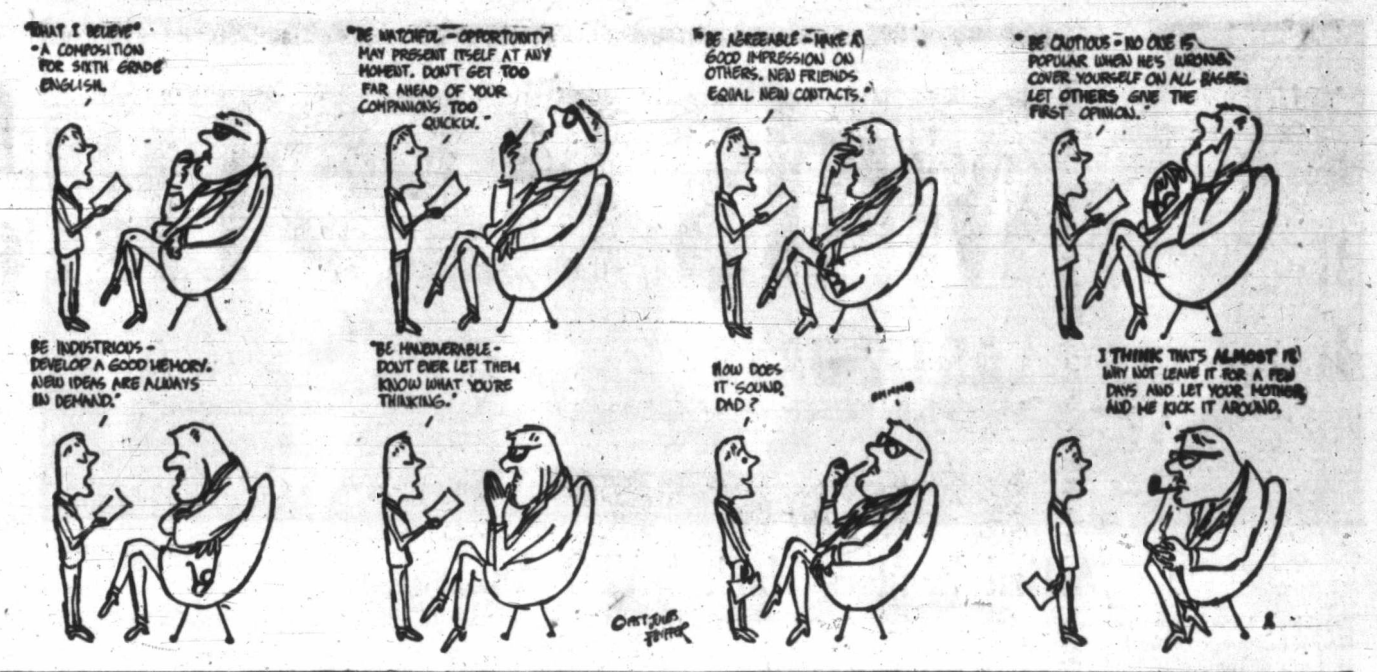
The area represents one-seventh of the earth's surface and includes one-sixth of its inhabitants—450,000,000 people.

Despite their diversity, they have much in common.

They share much the same way of life, making allowance for their various stages of economic development, and all adhere to the basic democratic principles of Western civilization.

Most, though not all, of the pact members have a seaboard on the great ocean that gave their alliance its name — the Atlantic. Some, including Greece and Turkey, are Mediterranean powers.

One basic principle binds all 15 nations together: all are resolved to defend themselves against Communist imperialism and all are agreed that an armed attack on one or more of them shall be regarded as an attack against them all.



Thinking Aloud

". . . of shoes—and ships—and sealing wax—of cabbages and kings."

By TOM TAYLOR

PAUL-HENRI Spaak, the NATO secretary-general, chides the alliance for lack of unity. Coalitions never did achieve the harmony of a single entity, which is one of the disadvantages the West has in comparison with Soviet Russia. It does seem absurd, though, that as he cited France should spend billions to find out atomic secrets well known to her NATO allies. There is small semblance of co-operation here.

America hugs her atomic discoveries to her bosom like a jealous parent, but I should have thought that Britain, forced by this fact to further her own atomic research at great cost, would have been willing to share nuclear knowledge with France. These three NATO musketeers are obviously not as close as were the famed companions of D'Artagnan. Yet they are supposed to be playing on the same team.

* * *

We were discussing lions the other day and yesterday I came across this verse written a century ago by a naughty schoolboy, to wit:

There was a young girl called O'Brien
Who sang Sunday-school hymns to a lion.
Of this lady there's some
In the lion's tum-tum,
And the rest is an angel in Zion.

She must have chosen the wrong hymn number.

* * *

Russ Columbo has been dead some 20 years and his voice the other night was really only a shade but it was as strong and clear as when he and Bing Crosby vied for radio fame. Some say that by dying Columbo left the air free for Crosby, crooning not then being the disease it has since become. Both Columbo and Crosby might be indicted for promoting something the world could do without, except that as crooners they had a pleasing quality many of their successors lack.

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Tape recording is modern magic but we take for granted the broadcast of voices stilled forever. What a pity so many great persons lived before the age of electronics. How fascinating it would be to hear a rebroadcast of Napoleon addressing his troops, for instance, or John Knox thundering in St. Giles, or, maybe, Mark Antony at Caesar's bier.

Other thrilling happenings brought to life again might include Lincoln at Gettysburg, Jenny Lind in full song, Macdonald or Laurier in election debate, Robin Hood speaking softly to Maid Marian, or Michelangelo arguing with Pope Julius II. What a legacy there would be had a tape recorder been in the Victory's cockpit or on the Plains of Abraham. Alas, these celebrated figures were all born too soon.

* * *

It is interesting to note that Britain has a billion-dollar surplus for the fiscal year just ended, whereas Canada expects to have a deficit of nearly that amount over the same period. Either they are better housekeepers over there or they aren't so shiftless as North America seems to think. We, of course, are the go-getters, but apparently at the price of living well above our income.

* * *

Judge McPhee, a newcomer to the city who adorns it with the sparkle of his eloquence, defends the title "Dominion of Canada" on the ground it was good enough for Confederation fathers and should be good enough for modern Canadians. I am with him about "Dominion" although mainly because there seems no inferiority in it to me and also that it makes a nice handle to the title "Canada"—a la Republic of this-or-that and Union of so-and-so.

The fact is however the term has been quietly dropped in official circles, and except perhaps when the DBS is being quoted — Dominion Bureau of Statistics—it is now seldom used. A pity, for "Dominion" could well stand for dominion over our own national affairs, which surely is self-evident nowadays to all the world.

Time for Steadfastness

No Settlement with Khrushchev

By PROF. W. B. HARVEY

RECENT performances by Soviet rulers have presented a puzzling picture. Vice-Premier Mikoyan made an extensive tour of the United States and was surprised by the obvious desire of Americans for peace, and went home leaving the impression that an easing of tension between East and West was in the offing.

Prime Minister Macmillan visited Russia in an attempt to find out what the chances of a settlement are. While he was in the Soviet Union Khrushchev delivered a belligerent, no-compromise speech, generally regarded as an insult to Macmillan.

And then came a set of new proposals from Khrushchev which seemed to open the door to negotiation.

How are such antics to be interpreted? Admittedly, any suggested explanation is little more than a guess because it involves trying to analyze the workings of Khrushchev's not-too-stable mind. Nevertheless, on the basis of what is known about Khrushchev's character and objectives, it is possible to suggest an explanation of his behavior.

* * *

Khrushchev is a dictator — and a bully. It is a commonplace of psychology that most bullies have an inner sense of insecurity. And as the Italian historian, Ferrero, pointed out in his illuminating book, "Pouvoir," dictators (that is, men who have obtained supreme power by the unscrupulous use of force and cunning) are insecure because their tenure of power has no basis of legitimacy.

Some Westerners who have visited Khrushchev have sensed his feeling of insecurity and have been deceived into believing that it is rooted in a fear that the West may attack him. Such a belief is ridiculous. The rulers of the Soviet Union have given us numerous occasions for attacking them, had we been inclined to do so: their violation of their agreements to set up democratic governments in East Europe, the Berlin blockade and Korea—all of which occurred while we possessed the atom bomb and they did not. When we did not attack them under those conditions it is hard to see how any sane man could believe that we would attack them now when they are admittedly ahead of us in the arms race.

* * *

It appears that we still have enough power to destroy the major cities of the Soviet Union; indeed Khrushchev has been quoted as saying that atomic war between West and East would lead to universal destruction.

The danger of war then is the danger that he might get the idea that we would not fight. Mikoyan reported the strong and obvious desire of the American people to avoid war. Khrushchev evidently misinterpreted that desire for peace to mean that our governments would not have the support of their people in defending a city in the middle of Europe. He therefore felt that he could ignore and indeed insult Macmillan because Britain obviously would not fight to defend Berlin if the U.S. would not join in defending it.

President Eisenhower then made his strongest statement on the Berlin issue, saying that the U.S. would not yield an inch, that they would carry out their obligations to defend Berlin under all circumstances. Prime Minister Diefenbaker made a strong statement of Canada's determination to stand by the people of Berlin. In both countries, the opposition parties strongly endorsed the position of the governments.

We do not know what Macmillan said to Khrushchev in the meetings they had after Khrushchev's belligerent speech. But in view of his public appeal to the Russians to negotiate rather than fight it seems reasonable to assume that he made it clear to Khrushchev that the West would fight rather than surrender. It seems reasonable to assume further that the more conciliatory tone of the later communication from Khrushchev is the result of his realization that the desire of the West for peace does not mean peace at any price.

* * *

Khrushchev does not want a settlement. As Dean Acheson says, Khrushchev's policy is one of aggression. The new demands that he is continually making should be enough to awaken the sleep walkers like Cyrus Eaton who have been dreaming that Khrushchev really wants to be friendly.

Khrushchev's policy is to keep threatening us with war in order to wring from us as many concessions as possible. That is why he insists on a summit conference. He wants to push us to the very limit, and he wants to be at the conference in person to form his own opinion as to when the limit has been reached. You do not send a deputy into a poker game.

A genuine settlement must await a new ruler in the Kremlin. As long as Khrushchev is in power we can look forward to repeated crises—created by new demands in the various unsettled areas of the world.

But there seems little likelihood of a world war, provided always that we leave no doubt in Khrushchev's mind about our determination to fight if necessary—and provided we do not let any fanciful fears of "bankruptcy" prevent us from keeping our fighting strength at a high enough level.

The Packsack

Of GREGORY CLARK

SALADS are now so commonplace a part of the diet of all levels of the community that it is hard to convince people that well within the memory of the older generation salads were a sort of fancy luxury, even for the local gentry.

This was natural, since lettuce was available only during the local growing season. The same with radishes, cucumbers, celery. The time for salads was June. Of course there were cabbages for coleslaw in winter. But, out of the root house, they tasted a little earthy. You were considered to be living beyond your means if you had salads in winter.

Today the boys get salads in their lunch pails, along with their other goodies. And in the restaurants, even if you order only a sandwich, they put a little dab of salad on the side.

It is therefore time for the cutlery trade to realize that the salad has come to stay. Furthermore, salads are growing bulkier, slipperier and more complex every day. To eat a modern salad with a fork, even with a knife to come to the rescue with some of the trickier portions, is becoming much of a nuisance. It is time salad tongs were invented.

These should be delicate, ten-fingered tongs not unlike old-fashioned lump sugar tongs, but longer. And instead of having to manipulate an oil-slicked hunk of tomato or a six-inch tendril of lettuce onto a mean little flat fork, you would firmly grasp every darn bite, just bite size, in the firm pincers of the tongs.

How about it, Society Editor?

At ALL Times

Good Drivers Inconspicuous

(Ontario Safety League Bulletin)

A DESIRE for recognition is one of the basic human needs. The young, and the immature (who may be not-so-young), often seek the recognition they crave by making themselves conspicuous. That is particularly true on the roads.

Probably the best short definition of good driving is "A good driver is inconspicuous at all times." Remember that—it's a sure way to recognize consistent good driving. And if it isn't consistent, it isn't good.

Apply that definition and you will spotlight bad driving of every degree; from racing at 90 mph with a blaring horn, to cluttering up windows with dice and baby boots.

Following too closely, cutting-in, lane straddling, passing on curves are all conspicuous—and all are bad driving. So is loafing along a busy highway at 35 mph; delaying hundreds by parking on main thoroughfares at rush hours; pumping the horn in a traffic jam; stalling and bumping when trying to park.

A driver is conspicuous when his name is called out in police court; when he has to admit to friends that his licence has been suspended; and he is very, very conspicuous when a crowd gathers to see him helped out of an automobile wreck.

Everything the man-at-the-wheel does that attracts undue attention is bad driving. "A good driver is inconspicuous at all times."

Slow Boat to China

(From The Toronto Globe and Mail)

UNDER CCF needling, the British Columbia legislature has passed a resolution declaring itself in favor of greater trade between B.C. and the Far East, specifically with China. Good. But if B.C. hopes to trade with China, it had better take a look at its own economy.

Although heavily dependent upon export markets, British Columbia has allowed itself to get into a position where it has the highest costs in Canada, possibly the highest in the world. China, on the other hand, is producing at the world's lowest costs, undercutting even the Japanese.

China needs a great many things B.C. can produce. But she is neither willing nor able to buy them at the kind of prices B.C. is now asking. What is B.C. doing to bring those prices down? More particularly, what is the CCF doing to bring them down?

Fun, Fact and Fiction

A prominent New York psychologist says that everyone should worry, so long as the worrying is about the right things. But can we be sure that worrying about whether we're worrying about the wrong things is the right thing to worry about?

* * *

As if our 4 a.m. worry schedule weren't already crowded, now we learn that Africa faces a shortage of hippopotamuses.

* * *

Never mind the simple mysteries such as what happens to dead elephants; where did all the hula hoops go?

* * *

A television salesman had taken in a lot of used sets as trade-ins on new models and was desperately trying to peddle some of them. Collaring a prospective customer, he said: "This set is in excellent condition. Why, it was owned by a little old lady with weak eyes."

* * *

Geologists report that if the earth's crust were turned inside out it wouldn't look much different. So let's not do it.

* * *

The Sunday school teacher was somewhat taken aback by the sketch one of her students submitted toward the end of class.

"Why, Wilbur," she exclaimed, "that looks like a cowboy going into a saloon!"

"It's okay," he assured her. "He's not going to drink anything. He's just going in to shoot a guy."